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A

SERMON

AT THE

FUNERAL

Of the Reverend

Mr. *THOMAS GREY*,

Late Vicar of *Dedham* in *Eſſex*;

PREACH'D

In the Pariſh-Church of *Dedham*,
Febr. the 2*d.* 169½.

With a ſhort Account of his LIFE.

By *JOSEPH POWELL*, A. M. Rector of
St. *Mary on the Wall*, in *Colcheſter*.

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St. Luke Chap. ii. Ver. 29.

Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace.

IT is related in the Sacred Hiſtory, of the great Prophet *Elijah*, that he was perfectly cloy'd with Life, and pray'd for a diſmiſſion; he went a days Journey into the Wilderneſs, and came and ſat down under a Juniper Tree; and he requeſted for himſelf that he might die, and ſaid, *It is enough now, O Lord, take away my Life; for I am not better than my Fathers.* This looks like a Fit of Melancholy, occaſion'd by a Reflection on the unſucceſsfulneſs of his Miniſtry, and the rage of *Jezabel* againſt him; and ſeems rather to be mention'd as an Inſtance of the Imperfections that ſtick to the beſt of Men in this Life, than to be propos'd for our Imitation, or to be drawn into Example by us. The like Account the Holy Books give us of another Man, very Eminent for his Piety in the Age he liv'd in; that he loath'd Life, and was very deſirous an end might be put to it. The Objection againſt this Example alſo is, that Holy *Job* breaks forth into this Expreſſion in the anguiſh and vexation of his Spirit; and that it was the mere effect of the preſſure of that load of Troubles and Evils under which he labour'd: Neither can this be deny'd; for the Holy Man ſeems hereupon, both to ground, and to excuſe his deſire of Death, as will be eaſily diſcern'd by any, who will be at the pains to conſult that Chapter; of which give me leave to give you a ſhort Paraphraſe, ſo far as concerns this his Complaint of Life, and earneſt deſire of Death. Let me ask you, ſays he to his Friends, theſe Queſtions; Is not Death appointed by the Soveraign Lord of the

1 King. 19. 4.

Job 7. 16.

World to every Man? And does not Man ſpin out his ſhort Life on Earth in trouble and toyl, like an Hireling his Day? And doth not ſuch an one, wearied out with the Work and Labour of the day, naturally deſire the approach of the Night to give him eaſe and refreſhment? And is not this my Caſe, or rather, is not my Caſe much worſe? For both day and night are alike uneaſie to me; you cannot but be ſenſible into how miſerable a State I am fallen; you who have ſeen my former Proſperity (unleſs you have quite put off Humanity it ſelf) muſt pity my preſent Condition; and (which is to me a very ſad Conſideration) you are never like to ſee it better; for I ſhall enjoy no more good in this Life; my Body is already overrun with Worms, and I am become loathſom while I live; and you cannot but be ſenſible how very difficult I find it to maintain my Temper of Mind in this Condition. Since therefore God has aſſign'd Death as the End of all theſe Miſeries; can you blame me, that I pray God to haſten it? I know that 'tis my Duty to refer my ſelf wholly to God's wiſe diſpoſal of me; but aſſure your ſelves, if God would give me leave to make my own choice, I would much rather deſire to die than to live: And I cannot but look upon this deſire as proceeding from Wiſdom, and a right Judgment of things. But notwithſtanding the ſpecial Circumſtances attending both theſe Caſes, there ſeems to be ſomething in the Requeſts of thoſe great Men, very agreeable to the deſires of the beſt Men, whilſt under theſe, wiſeſt, and moſt compos'd Thoughts, and the happieſt and moſt promiſing Advantages of Life. A due Reflection upon the Vanity of Humane Life in its beſt State, with a ſtedfaſt Faith of a future happy State, to ſucceed the determination of the ſhort Period of our days here on Earth, are enough to diſpoſe us, not to be over fond of living any very long time here; and, with ſubmiſſion to the Will and Providence of God, very chearfully to receive our Diſmiſſion, when ever it ſhall be ſent us. We ſo ſenſibly find, that there is no perfect Happineſs to be met with on Earth, that nothing needs to be ſaid to confirm our Experience; nor are we ignorant of the reſult of dying, and the Re-

wards

wards that befal the Righteous; when once this Difficulty is overcome. Happineſs is the thing that all humane Nature is reaching at; and who would die ſtruglingly and with reluctancy, whilſt under the vigorous expectation of that great Declaration and Aſſurance given by our Religion? Rev. 14. 13. *And I heard a Voice from Heaven, ſaying unto me Write, from henceforth, i. e.* from the very time of their Deaths, *bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord; yea ſaith the Spirit* (which denotes the undoubted certainty of the thing) *that they may reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* The Scriptures therefore have given us other Inſtances leſs liable to theſe Exceptions; and which repreſent the deſire of Death, not as a raſh, unadviſed, impatient, or melancholy Requeſt, but as the effect of great Piety, high Attainments in Vertue and Goodneſs, and a very lively ſenſe of a future World; diſpoſing thoſe, who have thus rais'd themſelves above this World, and enlarg'd their Minds by the Principles of Religion, eaſily to part with all things here below; and to be under Wiſe, and Pious, and Devout Deſires of Death and Diſſolution. Such is the Inſtance of the great Apoſtle, who expreſſes his longing to be gone; and concludes peremptorily, that it was much for his Advantage to die; and though he was content to live, this was upon no other ſcore, but his being uſeful and ſerviceable to others: And he Pronounces this, as the common Deſire of all the Apoſtles, and very proper to be embrac'd by all Wiſe and Pious Chriſtians. *We know that if the earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolv'd, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. For in this, q. d.* for this Reaſon, *we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe, which is from Heaven.* And to mention no more, this was the Caſe of good old *Simeon*, a Juſt and Devout Man, as the Evangeliſt gives his Character, who had liv'd in the Faith and Hope of *Iſrael*, the expectation of the Meſſias to come; and by the Account given of him, ſeems for ſome time to have been waiting, both for the fulfilling of this Hope; and for his own Diſſolution. For he had receiv'd a Revelation, that he ſhould not die till the Meſſias ſhould come,

Phil. 1. 21.

2 Cor. 5. 1.

come, and he ſee him: In ſubmiſſion therefore to the Will of God, and in expectation of this Promiſe, he ſtill liv'd, not fond of Life, but chearfully waiting for Death, as the End of his Troubles here on Earth, and the beginning of a new and better Life; and coming into the Temple at the time that Jeſus was preſented to the Lord, according to the Cuſtom of the Law, he took the Child up in his Arms, and publickly declar'd, that this was the Meſſias ſo long promis'd; and the Revelation of his ſeeing him in the Fleſh being fulfill'd to him, he now expreſſes his hearty and earneſt deſire to be gathered to his Fathers in the Words of my Text.

Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace.

From which I might fairly Diſcourſe theſe Two things.

I. That it is very becoming a Wiſe Man, and eſpecially a Pious Chriſtian, to be very indifferent to Life, and to know when he has had enough of it; yea, to be weary of the World, and to be very willing to have his Diſmiſſion.

II. That it is a very deſirable thing to depart this Life in peace.

I ſhall conſider only the Firſt Particular, and before I enter upon the Argument, I muſt ſet theſe following Bounds and Limitations to it.

1. This is to be underſtood with great deference to the Wiſdom and Providence of God, ſo as to ſhow no impatience of Life.

2. With reſpect to the Benefit and Advantage of others, for whoſe ſake a Wiſe and Good Man, who is very willing to die, may alſo be willing to live; yea, upon this account he may be deſirous to live: when otherwiſe, and for his own ſake, he would make it his choice to die.

3. This

3. This deſire of Death is never to be divided from a firm perſuaſion of Mind, that whatever God orders to us, be it Life, or Death, is, for that reaſon, beſt; and therefore it is rather to be underſtood, as a deſire, that God would then take us out of this World, when, to his Infinite Wiſdom, it ſhall appear to be moſt for our, and the Advantage of others, who depend upon us, or we have any relation to.

1. This is to be underſtood with great deference to the Wiſdom and Providence of God, ſo as to ſhow no impatience of Life. We are in this World like Soldiers in an Army, aſſign'd by their General to their ſeveral Poſts; which would be direct Diſobedience, proceeding from Sedition, Mutiny, or Cowardice, to deſert, without leave: And from what Cauſe ſoever it proceeds, it is highly puniſhable. Such a Poſt is humane Life; which muſt not be abandon'd without permiſſion, and till the Providence of God diſcharge us. We muſt not be ſo weary of Life, or fond of Death, as voluntarily to forſake the one, and haſten the other by our own acts, or any means uſed upon our ſelves. This, I am aware, has of old been accounted a true Inſtance of a *Roman* Spirit of Magnanimity, and Greatneſs of Mind, for Men to diſpatch themſelves; and thereby put a period to thoſe Evils they were not able to bear: Thus the brave *Cato* ſlew himſelf, not being able to bear *Cæſar*'s Victories, nor to endure to think of falling into the Conqueror's Hands. Thus *Paulus Æmilius* replied to *Perſeus*, when he ſo meanly ſupplicated him that he might not be led in Triumph, That it had been, and was ſtill in his own Power to prevent this Diſgrace; and that it was the true mark of a Coward to have a Remedy at hand, and not to dare to uſe it. But as ſuch actions as theſe are utterly inconſiſtent with a ſteady Belief of God's Wiſe Government of the World; and, particularly, with the Principles of Chriſtianity; ſo neither are they Inſtances of that Greatneſs of Mind they pretend to; they are rather plain Evidences of Puſillanimity, and Vileneſs of Mind; in that Men cannot bear Evils, as becomes Philoſophers,

loſophers, and eſpecially Chriſtians; but are prevail'd upon baſely and meanly to fly from them; as St. *Auſtin* excellently argues in that noble Book of his, of the City of God; where he maintains, that a voluntary Death is no Argument of Greatneſs of Mind.

2. It muſt be underſtood with reſpect to the Benefit and Advantage of others; for whoſe ſake, a wiſe and good Man, who is willing to die, may alſo be willing to live; yea, upon this account, be deſirous to live, when otherwiſe, and for his own ſake, he would make it his choice to die.

That which cauſes other Men to deſire their Lives, is a good reaſon to themſelves to deſire to live; at leaſt, to be ſo well content with this, as not to be weary of Life. When a Man is of more than ordinary Uſe and Benefit to the Common-wealth, or the Church of God, or in the Place where he lives, or when he has a numerous Family, and many young Children, who are growing up as Plants for the next Age; who receive a mighty Benefit by his careful Proviſion for them, by his Inſtruction, by his Example, and by a great Diligence and Care uſed in their Education; and when, by the courſe of Nature, he might yet have liv'd many Years: In ſuch caſes it is very reaſonable for others to deſire the Lives of ſuch Men: Sometimes the ſcarcity of ſuch Men, and the circumſtances of the time, when their Help and Aſſiſtance is like to be, in a ſpecial manner, beneficial to the World, renders it reaſonable to be very earneſt in asking of God, their Lives: And thoſe are alſo good Reaſons why they themſelves ſhould deſire to live; living to the benefit of others, and ſo as to be uſeful in our Generations, being one great End of Life; and a conſiderable Reaſon why it is deſirable. And this was the very caſe of St. *Paul*, which put him to ſuch a ſtruggle with himſelf, which to deſire. In reſpect of himſelf, it was paſt all diſpute, that Death was moſt deſirable; but in regard to thoſe, to whom his Miniſtry was ſerviceable, he was content to bear Life a little longer. *I am in a ſtrait*, ſays he, *betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better*; Phil. 1. 23.

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nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you.

3. This deſire of Death is never to be divided from a firm perſuaſion of Mind, that whatever God orders to us, be it Life, or Death, is, for that Reaſon, beſt: And therefore is rather to be underſtood as a deſire, that God would then take us out of this World; when, to his Infinite Wiſdom, it ſhall appear to be moſt for our own, and the Advantage of others, who depend upon us, or we have any relation to. This is that great Principle, which alone can carry us chearfully through this World, and diſpoſe us to ſubmit freely, not only to the variety of Changes we meet with in it; but alſo to our great Change; and neither impatiently to expect it, nor yet to be ſtartled at it, when it comes. In our very judgment, as *Epictetus* ſpeaks, more to conſent to that, which God would have, than what our own Inclinations lead us to: To deſire and wiſh juſt ſo, as God doth: We may miſtake (and ſo may our Friends too, in their Opinion of things) when we imagine, that had we liv'd longer, we could have been very uſeful to the World; and done a great deal of good in it. God is the beſt Judge of this; and he is the Wiſe Diſpoſer of our Lives. 'Tis ſufficient for us, that we have done what good we could while we did live. We may be troubled for our Family, and Relations, for our little Children, and ſome ſpecial Friends, who enjoy'd a viſible Advantage by our continuance amongſt them. We may be concern'd to conſider how hard it is like to be with our Off-ſpring, and how many ſhocks they may indure after our departure. But, do we remember that we leave them to the Care of that Waking and Merciful Providence, of which we our ſelves have had ſo large an Experience all our Days. We may be wretchedly out, and often are ſo in our foreboding of Events. Their being depriv'd of our Help, and Aſſiſtance, and Proviſion, renders them the more immediate Objects of Divine Providence; and it has been often ſeen, that Children, whom their Parents fear'd they had left in bad Circumſtances, have in a wonderful manner, been better provided for when their Parents have been taken

away from them, than probably they would have been, had they continued with them; that Reflection, which the Holy *Pſalmiſt* makes upon his own Life, being frequently verified in the Poſterity of good Men: *When my father and mother forſake me, the Lord taketh me up.* Again, we may think, that hitherto we have made but low attainments in Vertue, and Goodneſs; but could we have liv'd a little longer, we ſhould have been mighty Proficients in Chriſt's School; we could have got a much greater Conqueſt over the World, and our ſelves; we could have enobled our Minds with more fixt and laſting Habits of Vertue; and, if God would be pleas'd to continue our Lives, we ſhould be much fitter for Heaven ſome few Years hence, than we are at preſent. But in this alſo we may be as much miſtaken, as in our other Thoughts. Have we conſider'd that our Vertue, in this World, will always be very imperfect? Have we weighed what our Danger is, as long as we live here? Do we know, if we live longer, what future Temptations we may meet with? or can we tell what Influence they may have upon us? or be ſure that they ſhall not prevail over us? And what do we think of that Declaration of the Prophet, which holds good under the Goſpel-Covenant: *When the righteous man forſakes his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, and doth as the wicked doth, his righteouſneſs that he hath done, ſhall not be mentioned: In his treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed, and in his ſin that he ſinneth, in that ſhall he die.* It ſufficeth, that at preſent we walk ſincerely, and with Integrity, in the way of God's Commandments; and that we heartily, and univerſally comply with our Duty, though in much weakneſs, and encompaſt with many infirmities: The reſt is to be left intirely to the Wiſdom of God: And when he calls us out of the World, we may hope, and (in as much as all things are order'd by Infinite Wiſdom, and God's Goodneſs is over all his Works) have reaſon to believe, that this is the moſt fitting time for us to die in, and beſt alſo for thoſe, who belong to us, and for the World in general. Having fixt theſe Bounds to it, I now proceed to the Argument it ſelf, *viz.*

Pſalm 27. 10.

Ezek. 18. 24.

That

That it is very becoming a wiſe Man, and eſpecially a Pious Chriſtian, to be very indifferent to Life, and to know when he has had enough of it; yea, to be weary of the World; and to be very willing to have his Diſmiſſion. Many Conſiderations offer themſelves for the evincing the Truth of this Propoſition; ſome reſpect a wiſe Man barely conſider'd as ſuch; others concern him as he is a Chriſtian. I ſhall name ſome few of both ſorts: Thoſe that reſpect a wiſe Man barely conſider'd as ſuch, are theſe following:

I. A juſt and impartial Reflection upon the ſtate of humane Nature.

II. A Conſideration of the future Contingencies of Life.

III. A view of Death, with reſpect to the Good and Evil of Life.

IV. That univerſal Law, That all, who are born, muſt die.

1. A juſt and impartial Reflection upon the ſtate of humane Nature. That this is very Deplorable, has been the loud Complaint of all the Ages of the World; which has been made by the wiſeſt Men, who have moſt narrowly conſider'd Man's Condition in all his various Circumſtances: And though there are many Goods in Life, which are not morоſely, and with ſullenneſs to be deſpis'd; yea, it is an Inſtance of great Folly to rank them in the number of indifferent things; yet it has been generally agreed, that the Evils of Life do much over-balance the Good: And though perhaps this is not ſo, in reſpect of every individual Man; for ſome are in very happy outward Circumſtances in reſpect of others: Yet, if we conſider how it fares with the generality, (which we muſt do, in duly examining the Caſe of humane Nature) upon this view, there is no great doubt to be made, but the Obſervation will be found to be as true as 'tis common, and 'tis

a Wiſe Man's part, not barely to conſider his own preſent Circumſtances, but to enquire how it goes with other Men; ſince (humane Nature being common to all) whatever any other Man's Condition is, he cannot tell how ſoon his may be the ſame. When thou art lifted up with admiration of thy ſelf, for the Pomp wherein thou appeareſt to the World, caſt thy Eyes downwards upon thoſe who are cloathed in Rags, and want the Neceſſaries of Life: When thou art wandring, ſays the Philoſopher, at *Xerxes* croſſing the Ocean with his mighty Navy; think of thoſe Wretches who are digging through Mount *Athos*, who are forc'd to their Labour with Blows, and Blood mingled with their Sweat; call to mind that they had their Ears and Noſes cut off, becauſe the Bridge was broken down by the violence of the Waves; and conſider what ſecret Reflections they make upon their ſad Circumſtances.

'Tis enough to cauſe a Wiſe Man readily to embrace Death, to conſider only *Job*'s Deſcription of the Grave:

Job 3. 17. *There the wicked ceaſe from troubling; there the weary are at reſt. There the priſoners reſt together, they hear not the voice of the oppreſſor.*

2. A Conſideration of the future Contingencies of humane Life. Theſe are without Number, and yet the daily expectation of every Wiſe Man, who has conſider'd, what is repreſented by the Emblem of the Wheel, conſtant change and viciſſitude in the Life of Man. We are, ſuppoſe, very Rich; but do we know how long we ſhall be ſo? and may we not, ere we are aware, be as Poor;

Prov. 23: 5. *Riches make themſelves wings, they fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven,* ſo ſays the Wiſeſt of Men. We are at preſent in perfect health, brisk and lively, and full of vigour; but may not our Conſtitution ſoon be broken, and we caſt upon a Bed of Sickneſs, grapling with Pains, or crying out under extream Torture. We enjoy Liberty, and have a quiet Poſſeſſion of the Bleſſings of Life; but is it impoſſible that ever we ſhould fall under the Yoke of ſome of the mighty *Nimrods* of the World, the Hunters

Job 7. 15. of Mankind? When, as *Job* expreſſes it, we ſhould chooſe

chooſe ſtrangling rather than Life. *i. e.* If we were at our own diſpoſe, the worſt of Deaths would be far more deſirable than ſuch a Life. When *Xerxes* viewing his numerous Army, bemoan'd it, that within a little more than half an Age there would not be a Man of them left alive; one of his Captains reply'd, Sir, *Let not this trouble you, for they are like to endure ſo great fatigue, and ſo many hardſhips, that the greater number will, in all probability, wiſh themſelves dead, a long time before they ſhall be ſo happy as to die.* And thus the *Roman* Orator, comparing the Great *Pompey*'s Sickneſs at *Naples*, where he had like to have died, with his laſt End, concludes, That it had been much better for this Great Man to have died, when he had the Command of the Arms of *Rome*, and was the darling of the World; for this had prevented the Bloody War with *Cæſar*; the loſs of his Army; his flying with Diſgrace; his being ſlain by one of his own Servants; the preſenting his Head to his Father-in-Law; his Children turning Fugitive, and the Confiſcation of his Eſtate, but he had dyed in Honour, and never known any of theſe Evils: neither himſelf nor his Family. And upon this account was that wiſe ſaying of *Solon* to *Cræſus*, who had cauſe enough afterward to remember and acknowledge the Truth of it, That he muſt firſt ſee him die before he judged of his Happineſs; it being a Point of the *Grecian* Wiſdom, to account no Man happy before his Death.

3. A view of Death, with reſpect to the Good and Evil of this Life. 'Tis true, Death deprives us of all thoſe, which are properly called the Goods of Life: But, as theſe are not over Conſiderable, ſo it is our preſent want of them that renders them of any Conſideration at all: If we did not need them, their abſence would be no injury to us in this Life; the true Notion of Riches, being a ſufficiency to anſwer our Conveniencies; beyond which all is but meer imagination, and attended with the increaſe of trouble. Since therefore Death puts us in Circumſtances, that we cannot want them, and perfectly takes away their uſe, what trouble can it be that it removes us from

from them. To look upon it as a very uncomfortable thing, to be caſt into Circumſtances, where we cannot uſe theſe Goods, is to be ſo drowned in ſenſuality, that we are thereby become fit for nothing beyond this World, and hardly fit for this. But then Death takes us alſo from the Evils of Life, which are more in Number than the Goods, and much over-balance them, in reſpect, at leaſt to the generality of Mankind. A bare enumeration of the Evils of Life, does ſufficiently, in *Tully's* Opinion, commend Death, which puts an end to them. He tells us of one, who writing a Book in the praiſe of Death, did therein only deſcribe the Calamities of humane Life: On this Account Death has been ſometimes interpreted as a Reward for Eminent Piety. The very Heathens ſeemed to have looked upon it under this Notion. Thus when thoſe who built the Magnificent Temple of *Apollo*, prayed that what was beſt for Man, might befal them, the third day after they were found dead; which was reckoned upon as a Reward of their Piety. Agreeably to this, the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ſpeaking of the Death of Good *Joſias*, ſays, *He was taken away from the Evil to come.*

Iſaiah 57. 1.

4. The Univerſal Law upon humane Nature, that all who are born muſt die. It has ever been accounted a great part of Wiſdom, to bring our Minds quietly to comport with what is not in our Power to avoid. By this Conſideration we bear up under all the diſaſters of Life; this brings us into Temper, when we have royl'd our ſelves never ſo much, upon the death of our neareſt Relations, or deareſt Friends: And the ſame Thought ought, in common Diſcretion, to bring us at leaſt, patiently to ſubmit to our own Deaths, whenever they come. This is the great Argument that runs through all the Books of the Moraliſts: A Pilate, ſays *Plutarch*, cannot in a Storm command the Billows, or calm the Winds; or, by Hectoring, cauſe the Storm to ceaſe; he at laſt therefore commits himſelf to its Fury; pulls down all his Sails by the Board, and expects the ſinking of the Leaky Veſſel; and thus muſt we, when Life grows painful and uneaſie, and Death approaches, wait our Diſſolution,

Diſſolution, according to the Common Law of Nature; ſince that which is unavoidable, ought to diſturb us as little as is poſſible. This is the Principal Argument of all *Seneca's* Books of the Brevity of Life, and the Tranquillity of the Mind, and his Diſcourſes of Providence, That it is a very unbecoming thing to ſtruggle with the Laws of Fate, and not to be carried willingly, whither we muſt go whether we will or no. But far greater reaſon have we for this, who are taught, what a Vertue it is, and how capable of Reward, chearfully to ſubmit to the Wiſdom of God, in diſpoſing of our Lives; and theſe are ſuch Arguments, as are proper to induce a Wiſe Man not to be over fond of Life, and to know when he has enough of it; and, at leaſt, quietly and calmly to entertain the Meſſage of Death, when it is ſent to him. But then a Pious Chriſtian has Arguments beyond all theſe, to do not only thus much, but a great deal more; to be perfectly above any fondneſs for Life, and to rejoice at the Thoughts of his Diſſolution; and, with ſubmiſſion to the Will and Providence of God, heartily to deſire his Diſmiſſion; and they are theſe following.

I. A General Conſideration of the Religion we Profeſs, which has chiefly a reſpect to a future World.

II. Our Knowledge that the Sting of Death is pulled out.

III. The Thoughts of being abſolutely and perfectly freed from Sin.

IV. The enlargement of our Faculties and Perfection of our Vertue.

V. The immediate Poſſeſſion of Happineſs at Death.

VI. The Completion of this in Body and Soul at the General Judgment.

1. A General Conſideration of the Religion we Profeſs, which has chiefly a reſpect to a future World. The Chriſtian Religion Promiſes us very little or nothing that reſpects meerly this preſent Life: In this it differs from God's Ancient Covenant with the Jews, that it ſecures us of nothing of this World abſolutely, but requires us to refer all things to God's Wiſdom and Providence to appoint them to us, as they ſhall beſt tend to the making us wiſe and good; and to the fitting of us for what we are deſigned in another World. Hence Chriſt's Kingdom is ſaid not to be *of this World*: hence we are directed to look upon our ſelves as *Pilgrims and Strangers on this Earth*; that we are put in Mind, that we have here *no continuing City*; and are exhorted to be in the continual ſearch after *one that is to come*; that we are counſelled to *Set our Affections on things above, and not on things on the earth*; to have our *Converſation in another World*: That is, to behave our ſelves as thoſe who expect a Portion and an Intereſt there; and if we conſider a great number of the Goſpel Precepts, and weigh thoſe high degrees of Vertue they oblige us to; and to deny our ſelves in a great many Inſtances, which are very hard and difficult, and yet not altogether neceſſary for this World; yea ſometimes to hate and deſpiſe this World, and to chuſe the greateſt Evils of Life; together with thoſe Duties of over-looking our own Advantage for the greater Benefit of others; of doing Good for Evil, of waſting our Spirits, and laying out the Strength and Vigour of our Days, in doing good to Mankind; we cannot but conclude, that theſe Rules have a reſpect to ſome future World; and that they are deſigned to raiſe us up to ſuch a Temper of Mind, as may prepare us for ſomething God has intended us for, when there ſhall be an end of this Life of Man upon Earth. Neither can we poſſibly have any doubt of this, who believe the Chriſtian Revelation; the Promiſes whereof have ſo direct a reference to a Future State of things. This Faith was the great ſupport to the Primitive Chriſtians, under thoſe hard Circumſtances they were in: Their Thoughts were fix'd upon ſuch

John 18. 36. Heb. 11. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 11. Heb. 13. 14. Phil. 3. 20.

ſuch Promiſes as theſe, *Him that overcometh will I cloath in white rayment, and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life; and I will confeſs him before my Father, and he ſhall ſit down with me in my Throne, even as I have overcome, and am ſet down with my Father in his Throne; and he ſhall inherit all things, and he ſhall reign with me for ever and ever.* Hence it was, that they were ſuch great Inſtances of Vertue, ſuch Bright and Shining Lights to the World, ſuch Glorious Examples of a mighty Zeal for God, of an ardent Piety and Devotion, of the moſt heroick Goodneſs, the moſt enlarged Charity; an exemplary Patience, and a very intire Reſignation of themſelves to the Will of God. Hence it was that they ſo readily parted with their Lives, and ſo willingly choſe to die, to the amazement of the Heathen World; who obſerved of them, that it was the belief of a Life after this, that was the Cauſe of all this Courage and Reſolution; who therefore would not ſometimes ſuffer them to be buried, but burnt their Bodies, and diſperſed their Aſhes; fooliſhly thinking, that this would abate their Hope of a Reſurrection. Now if this be the great thing that the Chriſtian Inſtitution teaches us, That this World is not our home, but that we live here expectants of one to come; What great reaſon have we to be fond of this Life? Or who can blame any Man for deſiring and courting Death upon theſe Principles? What is related of *Triſmegiſtus* when he died, whether ever ſaid by him or no, does very well become a dying Chriſtian, expreſſing his future Hopes and Expectations. *I have hitherto lived an Exile from my Country, but now I am going ſafely thither; I am returning to that Bleſſed City, whither we cannot paſs, without taking Death in our way.*

Revel. 3. 5. 21. —21. 7. —22. 5.

2. The having the Sting of Death pulled out for us. Death muſt be allowed to be very terrible to a wicked Man; for when he dieth, *His hope periſheth, his expectation is utterly cut off.* There's an end of all that, in which he has placed his Confidence; the Man who has Calculated all his Projects, and deſigns meerly for this World, muſt needs be ſtrangely ſurprized, when the Meſſage is

Prov. 11. 7.

brought him, that God requires his Soul, and that he must give up his Account, and his Stewardship (for so the Scripture calls this Life) is at an end: But the loss of his present Enjoyments is not all; he goes out of this World in a State of Guilt, and is haled to the Divine Tribunal, and there Sentenced to a Punishment, we know little more of, than this, That it is certainly a very Terrible one; and probably greater than we can at present conceive it to be; 'Tis far otherwise with the Good Man; he parts with nothing that is overvaluable to him, having never engaged his Affections to what he always knew, was to be left in a few days; and he goes out of the World with his Sins Pardoned, and delivered from the Threatnings annext to the Law; and this is that pulling out the Sting of Death, which we owe to the Merits and Satisfaction of our Blessed Saviour; in Consideration of which, a Christian may look on Death as a hurtless thing, whose wounding Power is taken away, as St. *Paul* tells us in that Triumphal Song, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. *O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

3. The Thoughts of being absolutely and perfectly freed from Sin.

All the Evils and Miseries of this Life put together, are not half so much a Burden to a Pious Christian, as the sharp Contest that is kept up within him, betwixt the Flesh and the Spirit: The struggle betwixt the Principles of Grace and those of a Corrupt Nature, and the Advantage which the Devil, and Temptations, and his own Evil Inclinations, not perfectly subdued, often get of him, through the Remainders of Sin in him. These are Matters of his daily Sorrow, and Repentance, and Humiliation; and he often Trembles for those Sins he has fallen into, though long since; and which yet he hopes he has truly Repented of, and to his very last Breath, continues to *work out his Salvation with fear*: And though he uses all Diligence, according to the Apostle's Advice, to *reach to the full assurance of hope unto the end*; yet he considers

Heb. 6. 11.

that

that this is a Modeſt and Humble ſort of Aſſurance, which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and ſo very well conſiſtent with ſome Fear. Now Death is deſirable by a ſincere Chriſtian on this Account, that it ſets him above all his Troubles and his Fears: It puts him into a State where the Devil ſhall have no further Advantage againſt him; where this ſtruggling betwixt Grace and Nature ſhall perfectly ceaſe, where he ſhall no more diſhonour God, nor blemiſh his own Nature; nor have ſo much as the Sins of Infirmity to lament and bewail, but ſhall live in a perfect freedom from thoſe Moral Evils, which created ſo much uneaſineſs to him, and ſo often put him in hazard in this Life.

4. The Enlargement of our Faculties, and Perfection of our Vertue.

How ſhort Humane Knowledge is, they beſt underſtand who have ſpent the longeſt Time, and uſed the greateſt Pains in improving it; they who know almoſt nothing, may perhaps eſteem themſelves very great Clerks: If by chance they light upon a thing, which every one does not know, they preſently have a very great Opinion of their own Underſtanding; and (like the Son of *Syrach*'s Deſcription of a Fool, *That he travelleth with a word*) are very big, to let other Men ſee how very wiſe they are, of a ſudden, grown; whilſt thoſe, who know the moſt things knowable in this State, have very different Thoughts of themſelves; and, though they avoid ſuch a Scepticiſm, as to doubt of every thing; yet are they very ſenſible how many things there are which they know not, and how far they are from perfectly underſtanding very Common things: So alſo a little Phariſaick Piety makes a very fine ſhew, and a mighty noiſe and bluſter in the World: They who are got no further than this empty Form of Godlineſs, are highly opiniated of themſelves, and apt to deſpiſe all others as meer Sons of the Earth, not worth regarding: Whereas a truly Pious Chriſtian, is always a Humble Chriſtian; he has a very mean Opinion of himſelf, and is very ready to entertain a good one of other Men; he is ſenſible of the Imperfection of his Vertue, and

what low Degrees of it he has attained to; and his greateſt Comfort is grounded upon his Sincerity; and that he hopes and truſts, that his Heart is right towards God. Now who would be fond of this Life, which is ſo dark and ſo imperfect a State? Who would not be willing to die, that expects the enlargement of his Knowledge upon his Diſſolution, extending to a clear view of all the Works of God, and looking into the Secrets, and unfolding the Myſteries of Providence, to the near Contemplation of the Divine Nature, ſeeing God as he is, and comprehending his Perfections, as much as Angels do, and to the Fathoming the Wonders of our Redemption by Chriſt Jeſus; things ſo far out of the reach of our Underſtandings in this World; where alſo he ſhall arrive at Degrees of Vertue infinitely above what he is ever capable of coming to here: And, in one word, ſhall be, in all things, like unto the Angels of God which are in Heaven; and how happy may he conceive himſelf then to be? who conſiders, that he owes the chief pleaſure of his preſent Life, to the ſmall Attainments he has been able to make in Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

5. The immediate Poſſeſſion of Happineſs at Death.

Indeed if all Pious Chriſtians (ſome few only excepted) were to enter immediately upon Death, into a Place of the moſt exquiſite Torment, differing very little from Hell, ſaving in the infinite duration of it, and there to abide, none knows how long, even to the Day of the Great Judgment, ſome of them; it would be very unreaſonable for any Man to deſire Death, unleſs it were by Martyrdom, by which he might eſcape this Purgatory Fire; and the thought of dying would be the moſt dreadful one that a Man could have in his whole Life: But this is a meer Fiction, brought into the Church by Ignorance and Superſtition, and maintained for Reaſons well known; and has no Foundation neither in Scripture or Primitive Antiquity; defended by ſome, even of the *Roman* Communion, only as ſome other Doctrines are, becauſe Decreed in Councils, and ſo not to be let go, for fear of ſhaking a Pretence, that is not to be parted with.

with. The Scripture is, in this Point, very clear and expreſs, and aſſures us, that immediately upon Death, there is an admiſſion to Bliſs. *To day*, ſays our Saviour to the Thief on the Croſs, *ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.* And Luke 23. 43.
St. *Paul* mentions his being with Chriſt, as an immediate Phil. 3. 23.
conſequence of his Departure. Theſe are ſo plain Proofs, that, to evade the force of them, they muſt be exempt Caſes; and the Thief, and St. *Paul*, and ſome few more, never went to Purgatory. But this ſhift ſignifies little, for the Scripture ſpeaks of all that die in the Lord; that is, in the Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel, as being at reſt; which is a *Jewiſh* Idiom, and imports a ſtate of Bliſs. And St. *Paul* takes notice, that living here, keeps us from Chriſt, and therefore aſſigns this as a Reaſon, why we ſhould be willing and deſirous to leave this World, that we might go to Chriſt: *Knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord: We are therefore confident and willing, rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* 2 Cor. 5. 6, 8.

6. The completion of this Happineſs in Body and Soul at the General Judgment.

Though good Men are admitted to immediate Happineſs at Death, yet not to a full Participation of it, or to all that Happineſs God has deſigned them, by way of Reward: This is reſerved for that Great Day, ſo often made mention of in the Holy Books, when Chriſt, to whom the Matth. 25. 31.
Judgment of the World is committed, ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, in Triumph, and with great Splendor, attended with an innumerable Hoſt of Angels, to Acts 1. 11. 1 Theſſ. 4. 16.
render to every Man according to his Works. Then ſhall thoſe who ſleep in the Duſt awake, and the Dead ſhall be called out of their Graves, by the Voice of the Son of Man, and the Sound of the laſt Trump. Theſe Bodies of ours ſhall then be raiſed up from Mortality, and Corruption, to an Immortal and Incorruptible State; A wonderful thing, to be effected by that Power alone, which firſt made all things out of nothing: A Truth knowable only by *Revelation*, and received by *Faith*; and being united to their proper Souls, together with them, who ſhall then be found alive,

alive, and remaining on the Earth, we shall be caught up
1 Thess. 4. 17. in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. This is that great Day, the
2 Tim. 4. 8. Apostle speaks of, when Crowns shall be put upon the Heads of all the Faithful; even all those who love his appearing. This is the Day, when the whole World shall have its last Period and Consummation; when Death it
Revel. 20. 14. self shall be Eternally Destroyed; and God's Kingdom shall be set up over all, and his Saints shall Reign with him for ever and ever. And these I take to be good Reasons for every Pious Christian to be indifferent to Life, and very willing, with submission to God's Wisdom in Disposing of him, to have his Dismission.

Now the Use of this Doctrine, is,

1. To endeavour to reduce it to Practice. I mean to carry our selves, with all that indifferency towards this World, and Life, and present state of Things, which becomes wise Men, and good Christians. We cannot dispose of Events: What belongs to us, is to be content with that Portion, whatever it is, that Providence allots us, and to manage every thing to the best advantage, and to take care that what befals us, without our leave, may not disturb us. It is not worth the while, for gaining the World, to do any thing, not only, which is plainly Unjust; but any thing, that is Uncharitable, Mean, Painful, or Base: And what we possess fairly, and honestly, it is Wisdom so to use, as
1 Cor. 7. 11. not to abuse it; remembring, as the Apostle speaks, That the Fashion of this World passeth away: Neither to be over anxious and sollicitous about it, nor to suffer our whole Life to be eat up with the Cares and Concerns of it, nor so to set our Hearts and Affections upon it, as that it should ever prove horribly troublesome, and uneasie to us to part with it: To avoid that Error, our Saviour corrected in *Martha*, To be always Carking about things little and needless; and with her wiser Sister, to be careful to
Luke 10. 40, 41, 42. secure to our selves that better part, those vertuous Dispositions and Habits of the Mind, which shall never be taken away from us. To consider this World as only of present

Use;

Uſe; and when the time comes, that this Uſe is to ceaſe, to take our leaves of it, as a thing we are no further concerned in. If we enjoy the Good of Life, to receive it Thankfully, and manage it with Diſcretion, and ſo as it may turn to our Advantage hereafter. If we have our ſhare in the Evils of Life, to bear theſe with Moderation, and Patience, as expecting better things to come. And, as to Life it ſelf, neither to be Prodigal, nor Niggardly of it; to eſteem it neither above, nor below its juſt Value; to take care to preſerve it, as far as becomes a wiſe Man; and yet to be ready to part with it upon a good account; to prefer the keeping the Integrity of our Minds and a good Conſcience before it; but yet to chuſe to die, though a violent and immature Death, rather than do an ill thing to prolong Life; the doing of which is a far greater Evil, than Death can be to a good Man.

2. In order to this, it ought to be our great and main endeavour, to live up to the height of the Principles of that Religion we profeſs. *Plutarch* tells us of one, who leading a very looſe life, conſulted the Oracle, Whether ever he ſhould live any better; to which the Anſwer was, That it ſhould be better with him after he was dead. Not long after this he dies; but while they were carrying him forth to be buryed, of a ſudden, he Revives, and comes to himſelf. But it was almoſt incredible, what a Change there was in the courſe of his Life; he became one of the moſt Pious and Vertuous Men of his Age; and being aſked, by his Friends, the Reaſon of this great Change, he gave them this account of it, That no ſooner was his Soul parted from his Body, but he found a mighty confuſion in himſelf, which he could not compare to any thing better, than the Pilot of a Ship being flung from the Helm, by the force of a Storm, into the vaſt Ocean; after this, riſing up, as it were above Water, and recovering himſelf from this Confuſion, he thought he felt himſelf alive, and, looking round him, he ſaw all things clearly, but very different ſights they were, from what he had ever beheld in this World: Amongſt other things, he ſaw a numerous Company of Souls, in very different ſhapes; ſome

ſome in mighty Tranſports of Joys, others in Miſeries inexpreſſible: Some of theſe latter, whom he thought he knew, he endeavoured to have approached and diſcourſed them; but they ſeemed to be like Perſons frighted and bereav'd of their Senſes, in a deep Conſternation flying from him, and wholly avoiding him: At laſt he meets with a certain Kinſman of his, who had been for ſome time dead, who calls him by his Name, and gives him a large Account of that State; and carries him about, and makes him an Eye Witneſs of the ſeveral Conditions of ſeparate Souls; but withal tells him, That he was not in the Number of the Dead, but by permiſſion only was come hither, and muſt return again to his Body. Whilſt he ſtood trembling at what he had ſeen, a certain Woman, admirable for her Form, took him by the Hand, and bad him keep in Remembrance theſe things. The Moral of this Story inſtructs us, what influence a direct view of another World is fitted to have upon us; and what then may not be expected from us, who have ſo full and clear a Revelation of it, and of the ſeveral States of Men, when arrived there? Let us then walk by this Faith, and have our Eyes fixed upon the Recompence of a future Reward. Let us remember, that the great deſign of our Religion is to Train us up for Heaven; and that all the great things it has promiſed, are to be accompliſhed and perfected in a future World: Let us look upon our ſelves as only paſſing through this, and travelling home to our Fathers Houſe, whither our Forerunner is already gone, and where Manſions of Glory are prepared for us; ſuch Weights of Glory, as the Apoſtle did not know how to expreſs, exceeding Eternal weights of Glory: Let us often converſe with that World, the World of Angels and Bleſſed Spirits; a World of perfect Knowledge and Vertue, of Goodneſs and Charity; a Region of Pure and Spotleſs Light, where God himſelf has his peculiar Throne; where there is no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon to ſhine in it; for the Glory of God does lighten it, *and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* Let our Hearts be much there where our chief Treaſure is, where our conſummated Happineſs lies; ſo ſhall we be able to preſerve a Wiſe

Rev. 21. 23.

and

and Pious Indifferency to this World and Life, ſo ſhall we take care to live as uſefully, and do as much good as we can in the World; ſo ſhall we always keep our ſelves in an actual Preparation for Death; and, whenever it comes, being born up by the ſtrength of our Faith and Hope in God, and in his Promiſes, we ſhall chearfully take up this Pious Hymn of good Old *Simeon*, and ſay,

Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace.

I am ſenſible I have been too long upon this Subject, in regard there is another I know you will expect I ſhould ſpeak ſomething to: But if I beg a little of your Patience, I know not when I ſhall do this again; and I am pretty well aſſured, never upon ſo ſad an Occaſion. I am well aware how liable Diſcourſes of this Nature are to Cenſure and Exception: But in this Auditory, upon the preſent Occaſion, I am above theſe fears. It is allowed by all, that there is a juſt Praiſe due to thoſe who have raiſed themſelves above a common Level: I do not mean in amaſſing together a more than ordinary heap of Riches, the Portion as commonly of Fools as of the Wiſe, and at leaſt equally reached by Good and Bad Men; but in thoſe Gifts of true Wiſdom and real Goodneſs, the greateſt God has given to Men; by which there ſeems to be as great a difference amongſt Men, as betwixt Man and the Beaſts, or as betwixt ſome Men of exalted Vertue and the Angels above: For while ſome are raiſed up to a Divine Likeneſs, others have almoſt quite defaced the Image of God in themſelves, and are ſunk a vaſt way below the Dignity of Humane Nature, into Ignorance, Folly, Immorality, and downright Brutiſhneſs: Such who have been thus diſtinguiſhed from others in their Lives, ought to be ſo in their Deaths too; and not to go out of the World without a more than ordinary notice taken of them: 'Tis fit that their Wiſdom and Vertue, which rendered them ſo uſeful while they lived, ſhould be propoſed to the World as an Example, and for the imitation of ſuch as ſurvive them. This has been the Practice of all Nations, to have Orations of Praiſe, at the Interment of

such who lived usefully in their Generations. The Scripture mentions it as an Act of Honour done to the Righteous at their Deaths, and seems very plainly to recommend it in
2 Chron. 32. 33. those Promises to the Good Man, *That his Name shall be had in remembrance, and his Memory be blessed.* The Practice of the Christian Church in this Point is so well known, that I shall not spend time needlessly to insist on it. Supported by this Authority, I will venture to draw a short Character of your Deceased Pastor. He was a Man of a very large Understanding, of a quick and ready Apprehension, and had a very happy way of expressing himself, which, as far as these are meer Natural Endowments, do, by no means, seem to be given by God to all Men alike; and would tempt to believe, that the difference in Men does not wholly arise from the Disposition of Bodily Organs or Education, or any the like Causes, but that there is really an inequality in their Original make. These natural Endowments were cultivated by a happy Education, and an early Acquaintance with all that School Learning, which is so necessary a Foundation for rendring a Man useful in any considerable Post in Church or State: He was called very early out, to be a Labourer in God's Vineyard; an Employment (though some perhaps may imagine little of difficulty in it, and that the Clergy, of all other Men, live most at ease) that requires a mighty Pains, to be able to discharge it wisely and usefully; which perhaps the Apostle intimates, when he calls it *Labouring*
1 Tim. 5. 17. *in the Word and Doctrine.* Our Deceased Brother was so apprehensive of this at his first coming among you, where his constant Task was to preach three times a Week, besides the Monthly Preparation Sermon for the Sacrament, and many other occasional Sermons; that to be able to give a good Account of his Ministry to God, to his own Conscience, and to Wise Men; to approve himself *a*
2 Tim. 2. 15. *Workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth*; and that as becomes the Man of God, he might *be*
2 Tim. 3. 17. *perfect, throughly furnished to every good work*, as the Apostle exhorts *Timothy*; that is as a Teacher or Preacher of the Gospel, by the Study of the Scripture, be furnished for all

turns,

turns, and enabled to discharge his whole Duty towards the Souls of his Flock, as Dr. *Hammond* has Paraphrased those Words; he fell upon that excessive hard Study, which broke an excellent Constitution of Body, and so impaired his Health, that he was never able to recover it; and though he was in a while sensible of this, and often admonished by his Friends to remit that Rigour, yet his Circumstances partly necessitated him to continue it; and besides, by Use and Custom, it was become so pleasant a Diversion, that he seemed to think the Improvements hereby made to himself, to be an abundant Recompense for the Infirmities it brought along with it; and, as *Tully* preferred the living one Day according to the Precepts of Philosophy, to a vicious Immortality; so our Deceased Brother had a far greater Inclination to improve his Knowledge, and to live usefully, though but a few years, than to arrive at an extream old Age, with no other Sign upon him that he had lived long, but what might be discovered, as *Seneca* speaks, in Wrinkles and Grey Hairs. This I have particular Reason to observe, inasmuch, as when I have been discoursing with him, which was frequently, of giving himself a little ease, and calling in one to his Assistance, his constant Answer was to this Effect, That his Life could not be better wasted than in a careful discharge of his Ministry, and in doing all the Good he could; and let his Great Master call him when he pleased, *Happy was that Servant, whom his Lord, when he should come, found so doing.* In Consideration of this, his hard Study was not barely to satisfie his Curiosity, or to please himself with his own Notions (though this is both an Innocent and a very delightful Piece of Epicurism;) but to render himself serviceable to others, to discharge his Office with Credit to Religion; and to profit those in trust committed to his Care, he was a Constant, Judicious and Profitable Preacher. In all his Discourses he Studiously avoided, according to the Apostle's Advice, *all useless Questions, which minister only to strife*; and by which (let the Preacher argue and defend either side of the Question) none are made either the wiser or better Men. His chief Business

was to profecute Practical Subjects, with the utmoſt force of Perſwaſion; well knowing, that moſt Men underſtand their Duty, much better than they Practiſe it; and that to ſtir up their Remembrance, and over-rule their Wills, was one great part of the Miniſter's Office. His main Endeavour was to ſpeak good Senſe, and to deliver the moſt uſeful Truths in plain and eaſie Expreſſions; and was often wont to ſay, That the Practical Doctrines of Chriſtianity, were ſo perfectly agreeable to natural Principles, that if they were fairly repreſented, no Man would be found to make the leaſt oppoſition to them; but that the ſame Doctrine might be ſo intangled with Controverſie, under the ſhew of clearing them, that Mens Prejudices would ſtill over-ſway them, and every Man would retain the Principles of his firſt Education; and that ſuch Diſcourſes never turned to any Advantage of the Hearers, but ſerved either to Prejudice them againſt their Preachers, or to drive them into Heats and Contentions among themſelves, to the bane of Chriſtian Practice. We are lately told of a Noble Deſign, provided for in the Will of a very extraordinary Perſon Deceaſed, that every year ſhould be compoſed a few well Digeſted Sermons, wherein ſhould be ſet forth the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion in General, without deſcending to the Subdiviſions among Chriſtians: This is very agreeable to what was the conſtant Deſign of your Deceaſed Paſtor; whoſe chief Buſineſs it was to repreſent Chriſtianity, *As a Syſtem of Truths, which ought to purifie the Hearts, and govern the Lives of thoſe who Profeſs it*; where the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity were in hazard, none ſhewed a greater Zeal in exhorting earneſtly to *contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; witneſs his many cloſe Diſcourſes againſt Popery in the late Reign: And, as he apprehended there might be in time occaſion for it, he was ready to ſhew the ſame Zeal againſt ſuch Errors, as threaten utter Ruine to all Poſitive Religion: But, in other Matters, he abhorred Bigotry; and knew how to pity the weakneſs of Humane Underſtandings, and to allow for the Prejudices of Education; and though no Man had a greater value for

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our Church Conſtitution, nor could more heartily wiſh the Recovery of our Diſcipline; nor yet had a truer, and righter Notion of Religion; yet he never cared, roughly to diſturb People, though in an Error; when he ſaw the Error did no hurt, and that they, who were under it, did not purſue it, in any of its bad Conſequences; but were as careful to live Piouſly, and Vertuouſly, as thoſe could be, who were in the right: Yea, he would ſay, That, for ſome, whom he knew to be ſincere Chriſtians, he thought it was better to let them alone in Innocent Miſtakes; and that there was Danger in going about to ſet them right; yet ſo far as he could fairly do it, he always took care to rectifie Mens Religious Notions, and occaſionally, and by the bye, rather to inſinuate ſome Truths, than purpoſely to ſet himſelf to Argue, and Defend them.

His Conduct, among his Pariſhioners, was ſuch, as deſerves Imitation by the whole Order of the Clergy, in their ſeveral Places; and, perhaps, would do more to prevent the growing of Schiſm, than all the Laws that could be contrived in the Church's favour: His buſineſs was to keep up a good Underſtanding betwixt himſelf and his Neighbours, and likewiſe among themſelves. He was ready to ſerve the meaneſt of them, upon all other occaſions, as well as thoſe immediately relating to his Function. If there happened any breach, his Care was to ſtop it in its firſt riſe, well knowing how hard it is, oft-times to do it afterward. I might here mention ſome Offices of Publick Benefit and Advantage to this Town, which owed themſelves chiefly to his Advice, Induſtry, and Conduct: Particularly, the Settling an Induſtrious and Uſeful School-Maſter among you, and Recovering and Advancing the Credit and Reputation of your Grammar-School. This was his Behaviour among you, and ſuch a mutual Friendſhip was hereby grown up into a Habit, betwixt him and his Flock, that he would often ſay, If the Governors of the Church ſhould think fit to Reward his hard Labour, with ſome ſmall Dignity in the Church, he would moſt thankfully accept it; but he could never be in a place, where he ſhould be capable of doing more Good,

Good, or among a People, that were more likely to receive Good from him; and that therefore he could not tell how to entertain any Thoughts of leaving you, as long as he lived. In all the other Relations he bore, which were thoſe a of Father, a Husband, a Son, and a Brother, I never knew any Man that diſcharged theſe Obligations with greater Prudence, or more Exactneſs; with a wiſer Conduct, or a better Senſe of Duty. He had a Capacity which reached almoſt all ſorts of Things, and a wonderful Dexterouſneſs in Diſpatch of Buſineſs; which made him to be ſought to by all the Neighbourhood, and ſo often to be choſen an Umpire in their Controverſies; in all which, as his Care was to avoid Intrenching upon any other Man's Profeſſion, ſo he never ſought any Advantage to himſelf, but deſigned only doing Good, and obliging Mankind. His Converſation was both Pleaſant and Uſeful. He had, indeed, a ſort of Facetiouſneſs, that was very natural to him, and perhaps is ſo to moſt Men of free Thoughts; but it was Innocent, and when it had in it any thing of Deſign, it was only to convey wiſe Notices of things in this way, where he knew not how to come at Mens Underſtandings in any other. For my own part, I muſt ſay, that being freed from the neceſſary Impertinencies of a mixt Converſation, I ſcarce ever ſpent an Hour with him, in all the time of our Acquaintance, but with ſome Advantage; and it is a Juſtice due to his Memory, to own that I have learnt much from him. And, what I take to be a very high Accompliſhment of human Nature, an argument of a great and noble Mind, and not to be omitted in his Character, is, That he was a Wiſe, a Faithful, and an Intire Friend. I had the Happineſs (and a great Happineſs it was to my Life) to live in a perfect Friendſhip with him, which, from our firſt entring into it, (being founded upon no ſelfiſh Ends) never received any interruption; but grew up, and waxed ſtronger, as all good Diſpoſitions do, till they come into confirmed Habits. Whether Friendſhip be diſſolved by Death, on their part, who are gone into another World, I cannot tell. This was one of the Contemplations, our deceaſed Brother

was

was entertaining himſelf with, a little before his Departure. He was muſing, as he told me, whether he ſhould be able to do any kind Offices for his Friends, whom he left on Earth: However, on their part, who ſurvive, it is not diſſolved; for there cannot be a more tender Point, than the Name and Memory of a dead Friend. But that which is above all other Endowments, either natural, or acquired; and which therefore I reſerved to be mentioned in the laſt place, was his lively and vigorous Senſe of Religion: He throughly underſtood the Deſign of it, and was very ſenſible of thoſe infinite Obligations we are under, to the Goodneſs of God, for making ſo ample a Proviſion for our Happineſs, as we ſee done, in the Covenant of Grace in Chriſt Jeſus; and for furniſhing us with ſuch admirable Rules of Life; in the Practice of which Man's Happineſs ſo plainly lies, That our reaches in Vertue give us a very lively Senſe of our future Immortality. He was naturally of a very warm and quick Temper. Thoſe who converſed with him, and knew what a clear and exact Conduct he had of his Mind, may perhaps ſmile at this; as thoſe, who were acquainted with *Socrates*, and knew his abſolute and intire government of his Paſſions, did at the Phyſiognomiſt's Character of him; but that wiſe Man vindicated his Art, and aſſured his Friends, That the Man had judged truly of his natural Temper, which was corrected by the Principles of Philoſophy: And our deceaſed Friend would confeſs, That it was not Nature, but Grace that had aſſiſted him in this Work; and that he had done nothing in it, without great Pains firſt taken with himſelf. He was very careful of the Worſhip of God; and as he did all he could to bring his Flock to a ſenſe of Worſhip; being firmly perſuaded, that, unleſs Men can be brought to this, That reformation of Manners, which is ſo heartily deſired, by all good Men, can never be effected; ſo he was very exact in keeping up conſtant Devotion in his Family, and careful to impreſs a Senſe of it upon his own Children, and thoſe other Youths he was pleaſed to take under his Charge. He was a Man of great Charity, laying aſide, notwithſtanding his large Family,

Family, a certain part of his Revenue, annually, for ſuch uſes. Many inſtances of this I have been witneſs to, and ſome of his Charities have paſſed through my Hands, with Directions, not to let the Receivers know who was their Benefactor. He paid for the Teaching of Six poor Boys at your Reading School, and gave as many Bibles Yearly, with the Name of *DEDHAM*, indorſt; which you only underſtood to be a Gift of one, who concealed his Name; but I now acquaint you, That it was intirely his own Charity; and he has left it, under his Hand, that Five Pounds be paid at your next Governors Feaſt, for Diſcharging the Schooling of theſe Boys, and Furniſhing them with their Bibles, for the Year paſt. He had a mighty Senſe, ſuch a one as is not common, of the Wiſdom of God, in diſpoſing of all Events: The Providence of God has been defended admirably well, by many of the Philoſophers: Chriſtianity has helpt us to further Arguments in its Defence, by a clear Revelation of a future World, and a Judgment to come; but they are two very different things, to acknowledge a Providence, or plead for it; and practically to comply with it, and to bring our very Underſtandings, to conſent to every thing, as beſt, which God does. This latter was what our deceaſed Brother, above all things, aimed at bringing himſelf to. I will give you his Thoughts, in his own words, in a Letter, wrote to me, ſome Months before his laſt Sickneſs. 'Whether a longer 'continuance in this World be a Bleſſing, or no, neither 'you nor I can judge: For my own part, I proteſt ſo- 'lemnly, I have received a Reſignation to the Divine Will 'as a Principle, from which I will never depart; and I 'am Labouring for nothing ſo much as to bring my ſelf to 'approve, in my own Inclinations, the Choices that God 'ſhall make for me, whatever they be; and this I do, not 'only becauſe I am ſo perfectly ſatisfied, how much we 'owe that Obedience to that Government, under which 'we are; and to the Perfections of that Being, that Admi- 'niſters it; but becauſe I can find no other Principle ca- 'pable of miniſtring to my Quiet, and of ſupporting my 'Mind: For, eſpecially as my Thoughts are of my preſent ſtate;

'ſtate, if it were not for the force of that, I could never 'call off my Mind from attending to its apprehenſions of 'Danger, ſo much, as to do my Duty, and keep the Poſt, 'the great Diſpoſer of things expects from me, and has 'placed me in: But with this, notwithſtanding all my 'ſad Thoughts, I can eat, drink, ſleep, laugh, recreate my 'ſelf, and enjoy my Friends; and not be uneaſie to them, 'bleſſed be God, for ſuch Reaſons as we have to leave all 'Events in his Hand; and to hope they ſhall be merciful 'to us. For, by this Faith I live, and upon the Stock of 'this I hope to acquit my ſelf, at leaſt to my own Eternal 'Safety, when I die. This I take to have been the moſt inward Senſe of his Soul, which abode upon him to the laſt. For, in an interval, not long before his Death, acquainting him with the hopes his Phyſicians gave us, his Reply was, His Opinion was otherwiſe; and, indeed, ſaid he, now that I am gone on ſo far, unleſs God ſees it beſt to appoint to me a longer Life, I do not think it worth the while to go back. But having exceeded all tolerable Limits allowed to theſe Occaſions, I ſhall only leave with you, that were lately his Charge, the Advice of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 7. *Remember them that have the rule over you; or, rather, thoſe that have had the rule over you.* The word Ἡγουμένων, though it ſignifies any ſort of Ruler, yet, in this place, it muſt be reſtrained to Spiritual Governors, Paſtors, and Teachers; thoſe, who have ſpoken to you the Word of the Lord; and that it muſt refer to them that are dead, I think may be inferred from the latter words, where mention is made of their *exitus*, their departure, or the ending of their Converſation. To remember ſuch a deceaſed Paſtor, is to be thankful to God, that his Providence placed him over you; to be ſenſible of your loſs in being deprived of him; to think of him with Love and Affection, and Honour to his Memory; frequently to reflect upon that wiſe Counſel, thoſe wholſome Inſtructions, that Pious Example, which you have often heard from him, and long ſaw in him; and, above all, to continue in that good ſtate, in which he has left you, free from Schiſm in the Church, or Diviſions in your Town; living under a ſenſe of Religion,

and in Peace and Charity (which has hitherto been your Character) with one another. If you fail in any of these Points, besides that it will upbraid you with unprofitableness, under a painful and useful Ministry long enjoyed; the Effects that will follow, may force you to remember him, but without either Comfort or Advantage to your selves; and perhaps to remember also my Words to you this Day. But to conclude all with the Words of the Apostle; *Beloved, we are perswaded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation*, I mean, that Promise rather your future Happiness, than any Mischief to befal you, *though we thus speak.*

Heb. 6. 4.

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